

Welcome to the Public Service Center



1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington

"The new building will be a valuable tool for providing convenient, efficient services to Clark County citizens."

– Commissioner Craig Pridemore, Groundbreaking, June 8, 2001

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Dedicated on March 18, 2003, Clark County's Public Service Center is more than just a handsome addition to the Vancouver skyline. It puts a new face on county government, representing a wide array of county services provided under one roof and delivered with the efficiency our era demands.

Whether you're visiting the center for a marriage license, a construction permit, or information about your property, you'll appreciate the greater convenience of doing county business.

A landmark building

You'll probably also like the center's design, a pleasing combination of contemporary architecture and Art Deco flourishes.

The building is all the more impressive for the many environmentally friendly building practices it incorporates. And it's fiscally responsible—the building will actually save a significant amount of money in the long term.

Wired for the 21st Century

The center's gracious brick exterior and the ease with which it blends in with the surrounding neighborhood seems to soft-pedal the fact that inside, the building is a very technologically up-to-date environment in which to conduct business. It's literally wired for the future.



And while it may not conform to anyone's idea of luxury (remember, this is government!), the center has a pleasing contemporary ambience. An outdoor plaza and glass atrium welcome visitors into this modern building whose amenities include a large public hearing room, flexible meeting rooms and workspaces, and the Dragonfly Café.

LEED™ing the way

Protecting our environment often means doing the right thing. Early in the design process, county commissioners recognized the opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to building practices that protect the quality of air, water, and other natural resources.

They encouraged the planning team to design the Public Service Center to meet the qualifications for achieving the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED™ certification. Given by the United States Green Building Council, this distinguishes building projects that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental sustainability by meeting the highest performance standards.

The Public Service Center is the first public office building between San Francisco and Seattle to receive this certification. LEED™ standards represent some of the most stringent in the country for green building certification. "We continue to strive to be environmental leaders in the county while maintaining cost-effective practices," said Pete Capell, Public Works Director. "This LEED™ certification is the result of the innovative, hard work of staff, our architect, and our builders." Here are some examples of what makes this building "green."

- Building products such as steel, carpeting, and ceiling and ceramic tiles contain recycled content.
- Materials include use of sustainably harvested wood.
- Weight of recycled construction waste, such as asphalt and concrete, exceeds 90 percent of total.
- High-quality boilers and automatic lighting controls promote energy efficiency.
- Healthy indoor environmental quality results from use of carpet, paints, sealers, and other materials chosen because of low emission of toxins. Vents and HVAC ducts were sealed from debris during construction, and a building "flushout" before occupancy used a filter to remove all fine particles.
- Energy conservation measures are expected to exceed the Washington State Energy Code by more than 20 percent.

The hearing room

If you ever tried going to a commissioner hearing at the previous location, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the Public Service Center hearing room. It seats 115 people and can be expanded to hold 200 people.

The sound quality is also much better and the room is equipped for technologically advanced presentations.



A good use of taxpayer dollars

While the Public Service Center is certainly an impressive building, it's actually just a component of the campus master plan that was set in motion years ago by overcrowding in the Clark County Courthouse. In fact, the courthouse had become so crowded by the 1990s that one of the judges actually had to work out of a closet.

We knew we had a space problem. After numerous space studies, we decided that the courthouse should be used, well, for courts, and that the treasurer, auditor, assessor, and prosecuting attorney would have to move. The initial idea was to find some available rental properties for them. But this was an expensive solution.

Clark County was already paying large sums of money to rent space in various buildings scattered throughout downtown Vancouver. After an inventory of all these properties, we decided it would be smarter and cheaper to get out of rental properties altogether, existing and prospective, and simply build a new building. Over the next 25 years, the Public Service Center is expected to save the county \$46 million in rent.

With overall operations and systems maintenance designed for efficiency, the county's ongoing costs are also being lowered. Additional savings have come from other efficiencies such as shared conference rooms and workrooms, and by placing many county departments under the same roof. Employees no longer face the logistical challenge of coordinating work efforts from separate rental spaces. The Public Service Center also houses the Regional Transportation Council, and several departments from the city of Vancouver that work closely with their counterparts in the county.

Part of a larger campus master plan

Several new courtrooms have been added to the courthouse and that judge now has an office instead of a closet. The buildings at 1408 Franklin Street and Franklin Center at 1013 Franklin Street have also been remodeled as part of the campus master plan. Other elements included construction of the parking garage, pedestrian improvements, modifications to the flow of street traffic, and landscaping.

Ultimately, the emerging county campus furthers the redevelopment goals for downtown Vancouver. Instead of being an unrelated hodgepodge of buildings, the county campus feels friendly and easy to get around. It will be welcoming to citizens whatever the nature of their business with Clark County.



Facts about the Clark County Public Service Center

- The Public Service Center is located at 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington.
- The six-story building includes 164,000 square feet of space and measures 137 feet high, just five feet shy of being a high-rise building according to the Uniform Building Code.
- Designed to higher-than-code earthquake standards, the addition of X-braces as shock absorbers will not only saves lives but reduce building damage in an earthquake.
- Provides office space for more than 500 employees, consolidating many county departments under one roof.
- Magic number: 504. That's the number of spaces in the parking garage and the number of windows in the building. All but two private offices have windows. Lots of natural light helps reduce energy costs.
- There is a metal dragonfly above the main entrance of the parking garage off Franklin Street and dragonfly lights in the restaurant, which is called the Dragonfly Café. The dragonfly is Washington's state bug. "This was a very large construction project," said General Services Director Doug Johnston, "you couldn't expect not to have at least one bug."
- Colored fiber-optic lights rise in a line from the third floor up the elevator towers and then in a circle. They can be frozen on one color or feature multi-rotating colors. The circle resembles a clock, which is a common element in Art Deco.
- The healthy indoor environmental quality in the building results from the use of materials chosen because of low emission of toxins like formaldehyde. Also, windows in the building open.
- Doors leading into the three stairwells are airtight to create a safe place for employees in the event of fire.
- A media room is located near the Board of Clark County Commissioners hearing room on the sixth floor. Wired to allow the news media to easily televise hearings, the room also has computers and modems they can use to report stories.
- The parking garage to the north of the county's new Public Service Center is primarily for paid employee parking. However, there are a limited number of metered parking spaces available to the public in the garage. These are located on the east side of the ground floor.

- Children read from a large story book at the ground-breaking ceremony for the building in June 2001. On March 18, 2003, the same children finished the story during the official dedication of the Public Service Center.





What's located on each floor of the Public Service Center?

The Public Service Center has stairs at the front, center, and back of the building. Three elevators are located at the front of the building and one at the back.

First Floor

Dragonfly Café - Public restaurant selling coffee and food
Community Development Permit Center - Public copy machine
Public Works Environmental Services
City of Vancouver Solid Waste Services
Shower and locker rooms for men and women who bike to work or need to clean up after being out in the field.

Second Floor

Assessment and GIS
Auditor's Office - Recording and marriage licenses
Treasurer's Office
Shared front counter for all three offices
Exit to third floor of the parking garage
ATM machine in lobby

Third Floor

Community Development, except for Permit Center on the first floor.

Fourth Floor

Clark County Public Works
City of Vancouver Transportation
Regional Transportation Council

These three groups of employees have been located together because of their similar functions. They are responsible for planning, designing, and constructing future capital transportation improvements.

Fifth Floor

Auditor's Office - Financial Services
Human Resources
Information Services

Sixth Floor

Board of Clark County Commissioners
Executive conference room
Hearing room, which can be expanded into the training room
Training room wired for computers
Media room
Budget Office
General Services/Purchasing
Risk Management
Public Information and Outreach
Neighborhood Outreach Program



Before the Public Service Center: The site's history from 1848 to 1994

During excavation of the building site, crews found 100 tons of concrete footings and retaining walls, concrete pipe, brick, wood debris, and a decommissioned oil tank. Three bottles and multiple bags of artifacts were turned over to the archeologists prior to construction. The following information comes from an archaeological survey of the site in 2000 by Archaeological Investigations Northwest, Inc.

Site forms and maps from the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in Lacey, Washington, were reviewed as well as copies of historical maps on file at the Clark County Historical Museum. This is what the survey found:

- The General Land Office map of 1865 shows no development on the project area. It was outside the Vancouver town site, but within the Amos Short Donation Land Claim filed in 1848.
- The first map that shows structures is the Pioneer Real Estate Map of 1889. The map shows three houses on the south side of the block and a fourth on the west side. Mr. James A. Snodgrass was county auditor at the time his house was built (about 1880) in the southeast corner of the project area.
- The 1911 Sanborn fire insurance map shows more structures: The First Christian Church in the southwest corner of the project area, a residence in the northwest corner, and "Franklin School" in the northeast corner. There is insufficient information for exact construction dates, but some information was found indicating that Franklin School was built in 1904 and enlarged in 1907.
- The houses in the project area were among the earliest in Vancouver. The houses and school date to a time when outside privies and disposal of garbage on-site were common. Privies were commonly filled in with household garbage and often contain a rich assortment of well-preserved artifacts.
- Based on the 1928 Sanborn fire insurance map, the First Christian Church had been changed to a Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Franklin School building had changed to a "Public Schools Warehouse."
- A 1937 aerial photograph shows a football field in the center of the project area. It also shows the Royal Arms Apartments, indicating they were built sometime between 1922 and 1937.
- By 1949 the Franklin School was still being used as a warehouse; the church had been removed; a 24-unit apartment building (named Royal Arms Apartments) had been built on the southwest corner over an 1889 structure; a new house was built along W. 13th Street; and a new structure containing a school bus garage, bus repair garage, and school auto repair shop was built over part of the former football field.
- A 1961 aerial photograph shows the Franklin School had been removed. Shortly after the aerial photo was taken, the building that now houses Clark County Elections and Auto Licensing was built at 1408 Franklin Street.
- By 1971 three older houses, including two that dated to the 1889 period, had been removed and the paved parking area built. The school garage was removed around 1988 to 1989, and in 1994 the Royal Arms Apartments were torn down.